



Manifesto

CAMBRIDGE SOCIALISTS -

Why we need an alternative ?

Mainstream politicians tell us that there is not enough money to go round and so people must lose their jobs. Public services, pensions, pay and working conditions are under attack because we have no alternative but to bailout the banks. This makes no sense!

The average family in Britain owes £58,000. The banks have been allowed to lend us money that didn't exist, but we pay them back with real wages. Now every taxpayer is being asked to pay more so that bankers can continue to profit. The gap between rich and poor was at an all time high before the "crisis" and is now set to rise even further - it is the highest it has been since broke the second world war.

The Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties think that saving this banking system is the only way out of the "crisis". They look to private companies and the market for solutions to local, national and global problems. They continue to support wars for oil and gas that are causing massive loss of life and further destabilising the world. What we really need is a comprehensive programme of public works to create jobs and stop climate change.

A failure by governments to invest properly in education, health, council housing, renewable energy and high quality and affordable public transport is leading to poverty and environmental catastrophe. The failing of the political mainstream has given the BNP and others room to spread racist and fascist ideas in an attempt to divide communities and sow the seeds of hate.

We need a socialist alternative to war and greed. We are standing candidates in Cambridge to help defend our public services and fight for a different vision of the world.

What do we stand for ...

No cuts, no redundancies - workers must not pay for the crisis

Labour, Tory and Lib Dem politicians are all telling us there have to be 'savage cuts' in public spending, to enable the 'nation' to 'balance the books'. We say this is a con-trick. 'Balancing the books' actually means lining the pockets of the bankers and their shareholders at the expense of the jobs and vital services that working people depend on.

- **Stop any cuts whatsoever in our services and jobs;**
- **Halt the relentless drive to sell off public services to the private sector.**

End the privatisation and marketisation of the public services

Successive governments have pushed the dogmatic notion that 'private is best' in the public services despite the dismal experience of privatisation on the railways, the steel and coal industry, and the privatised utilities. This policy is now being extended to Royal Mail, which can only result in a postal service for big business, not ordinary people. Social housing is also being effectively privatised, despite the repeated opposition of tenants all over the country.

- **Defend and expand the public services including public transport, health, education, social services Post Office and Royal Mail and Council Housing;**
- **All services faced with the threat of sell-off must be kept in the public sector, and control extended over them by workers and users;**
- **Services and industries which have been privatised must be brought back to the public sector where they belong.**

Bail out people not the banks – run the banks in the interests of all

The current cost of bailing out Britain's banks so far has been £850bn - £13,800 for each person in the country is being dished out to keep the banks going. Many people are rightly asking how it is the government can find billions to prop up the financial system but sit back while people lose their homes, jobs and pensions, and how exactly is this debt going to be paid back.

All the major parties are planning to address this problem by introducing a series of severe cuts in public spending, so it will be us who must pay for a crisis that was created by high risk lending and speculative investment: this is privatised profit and nationalised debt.

- **Nationalise the banks and place them under democratic control to ensure they serve the needs of the people, not the people serving the needs of the banks!**
- **No more bonuses for bankers;**
- **No more home repossessions.**

Create 1 million climate jobs

At a national level we need an urgent programme of public works to combat the recession, to create new climate jobs and to build a new sustainable energy infrastructure. Such a job creation scheme must also encompass real training and apprenticeships and include:

- **The immediate construction of a sustainable, publically owned, energy infrastructure based on wind, wave, tidal, hydro and solar power; this could create a million new jobs;**
- **New sustainable publically owned transport systems which could create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. In Cambridge the first step should be for the Council to co-ordinate the development of an integrated transport policy for the City and its surroundings which should be free at the point of use;**
- **The renovation and insulation of housing to conserve energy and a commitment that all new buildings must have zero carbon emissions;**
- **A major programme of job conversion to socially useful production from industries such as car manufacture. In Cambridge any company facing closure should have an assessment by the Council and Trade Unions to convert it to socially useful production;**

- **Co-ordination with Trade Unions to ensure that all job creation schemes include training for all and real apprenticeships where appropriate.**

A 35 hour working week with no loss of pay

Record numbers of people, especially young people, are unemployed. At the same time more and more workers are being made to work longer and longer hours. This cannot be right.

- **Cut the working week to allow more young people to start work, the cost to be met by the companies, not working people.**

Decent pensions for all

After a lifetime of work, pensioners deserve a pension that will allow them to live a full and active life. Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and all local employers should be supporting the following points in any public sector negotiations on pensions and should be working with the Trade Unions to campaign for these demands:

- **A full government guarantee for pension rights;**
- **Re-establish the link to average earnings;**
- **Restore final salary schemes;**
- **End the pensions gamble on the Stock Exchange;**
- **Current pensioners to be compensated for loss of income resulting from interest rate reductions;**
- **Move towards the nationalisation of all occupational pensions.**

Free healthcare for all

NHS Healthcare should be given purely on a needs basis, not discriminating on grounds of age, gender, ethnicity or location. We support free healthcare for all people in the UK at the point of use.

- **An end to all prescription fees;**
 - **Dentistry and ophthalmological treatments to be included free for all within the NHS;**
 - **An end to Foundation Hospitals; establish a democratic management structure for health care;**
 - **End the internal market and defend free healthcare coverage for the whole UK population;**
- Introduce 'compulsory licensing' so that a patent on a drug can be overruled when in the interests of public health and the drug produced generically.**

Free education for all

We believe that education, like healthcare, should be available free at the point of use for all. There should be no financial barrier for any student who has been accepted on any educational course.

- **Get rid of Foundations, Trusts, Federations, Academies; all schools to be**

community schools, run the Local Authorities in partnership with teachers, parents, community groups etc.

- Reduce class sizes and spend more on books and equipment for schools;
- An expanded and flexible curriculum, including a choice of after-school activities for primary and secondary students;
- Extend public nursery provision and fund it properly;
- All educational buildings to meet the best standards;
- Government-led training schemes given on the basis of social need;
- Free higher education for all students, whether in university or in vocational training, abolishing tuition fees and extending the existing scheme of maintenance grants to all;
- Safe transportation for all students to and from school where no public transport option is available;
- Free, nutritious school meals for all primary and secondary school children.

Limit climate change

We all have a responsibility to ensure that our environment is preserved for future generations to enjoy. Following the failure of the Copenhagen summit, we need to intensify our own work against climate change as part of the wider workers' movement. We need to challenge any reliance on the private sector to create green jobs and develop sufficient energy provision from renewable and carbon-negative means.

- Halt airport expansion and increase tax on fuel;
- Invest in low-carbon transport and create a national high speed rail network;
- Keep green spaces in and around the city clear and clean, and extend allotment provision to meet the need;
- Meaningful consultation with Trade Unions and local community groups on any proposal to extend housing, industry or transport infrastructure.

Stop the war, bring the troops home from Afghanistan

It is over eight years now that the troops have been fighting in Afghanistan for the so-called promotion of democracy and to fight 'terrorism'. This is vague, it's political, there is no endpoint and there is no precise enemy; the continuation of fighting in Afghanistan has turned us and our allies into occupiers. In the words of women's rights activist and Afghan parliamentarian Malalai Joya... "Your governments have replaced the fundamentalist rule of the Taliban with another fundamentalist regime of warlords. That is what your soldiers are dying for." Bombing Afghanistan makes violence and instability more likely, not less. Even NATO allies such as Canada have decided they want their troops home, so the question is why can't we?

- Bring the troops home now;
- End the 'war on terror';
- Stop the war in East Congo and Yemen.

Free Palestine

We support the right of nations to self-determination and oppose the violent oppression Israel inflicts on Palestine. We demand a free Palestine and condemn Israel's flouting of international law by occupying Palestinian territory in the West

Bank and Gaza. Palestine has seen a rapid rise in poverty due to 'closures' that restricted Palestinian movement. Last year when Israel flattened Gaza there was little distinction between civilians and fighters, and the use of phosphorus has been documented despite denials by the Israeli government. As a result of the violence against civilians and their property there are 50,000 Palestinians who do not have access to piped water and an additional 100,000 Gaza residents get water every seven to ten days only.

- **End the Israeli oppression of Palestine;**
- **Open the border crossings;**
- **Support the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian state**

No to Trident – No to the arms trade

We spend billions on Trident that would be better spent on the welfare of our citizens. In addition, the retention of nuclear weapons has wider implications for world peace as the main purpose for them is to fight war or threaten other weaker states; this only encourages other states to acquire nuclear weapons as a deterrent to our threats. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about the devastation on humanity as a result of the arms trade; it contributes to repression, worsens conflict and makes genocide more likely.

- **Abolish Trident;**
- **Stop manufacturing and selling arms;**
- **Campaign to end the international arms trade.**

Fairness and justice for all

We are committed to real social, economic and political equality for all women and men.

- **End all forms of discrimination against lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people;**
- **Oppose any actions or ideas that turn workers from one country against those from other countries, and reject racism, fascism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and the vilification of travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;**
- **Full employment and civil rights for all migrant workers;**
- **End child poverty and provide free state nurseries and crèches for all who need them;**
- **Fight the threat that the BNP and other far right extremist groups pose to our society.**

Civil liberties

Tory Britain and then New Labour Britain have both seen attacks on civil liberties and the so-called war on terror has been used as a pretext for further threatened attacks, such as the imposition of mandatory ID cards, extensions of detention without charge, and the widening of a culture of intrusive surveillance. The law is also still being used to block ordinary people fighting for their jobs and rights.

- **Repeal so-called 'anti-terror' laws that limit civil liberties;**

- **Cancel ID cards;**
- **Restore workers' rights through the repeal of anti-union laws;**
- **Defend trial by jury;**
- **End stop and search;**
- **End detention without trial.**